

JEFFREY MATTISON WERSHOW:
KILLED IN IRAQ

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2003

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to speak about a very brave young man, Jeffrey Mattison Wershow, who was killed in the line of duty in Iraq. A specialist in the Florida National Guard who served with the Army's 124th Infantry Regiment, he died at the very young age of twenty-two. Jeffrey was born in Gainesville, a city which is in my congressional district, Florida's third.

Compounding the tragedy of Jeffrey's death is that he was killed in Iraq while trying to keep the peace after the U.S. invasion had already ended. He was assigned to be part of a group of soldiers in a 124-man group assigned to escort U.S. officials. He was killed while guarding a convoy of vehicles while they were parked outside a campus building at Baghdad University when an Iraqi man approached him, pulled out a gun, and shot him.

For his service in "Iraqi Freedom" Jeffrey received the Army Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Achievement Medal, the Parachute Badge and the Army Service Medal. The Army in fact, has recommended that he receive the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart for his dedicated and honorable service in combat.

It is truly impressive all that Jeffrey had accomplished during his young life. He began his active duty in the U.S. Army back in June 1999. After he finished his specialized training, he went on to join the 82nd Airborne Division of the Army's 505 Parachute Infantry Regiment. From there, he went on to continue his service with the National Guard.

A curious and bright young man, Jeffrey had a burning interest in history and political science. He was active in Gainesville politics, and served as co-campaign manager to the campaign of one of my close friends, Cynthia Chestnut, during her County Commission campaign in 2002. He also participated in politics at Santa Fe Community College, was elected to the Student Senate, and was intending to run for student body president.

In a photo taken of him for which he will be fondly remembered, he can be seen patriotically waving the flag during last year's University of Florida Homecoming parade. Jeffrey, riding in the veteran's float, in a demonstration of boundless patriotism and limitless energy, jumped out of the boat and ran down the street waving the American flag to energize the crowd.

Jeffrey will be deeply missed by all of the people who knew him. I will keep Jeffrey and his family members with me in my prayers and thoughts.

2003 CYPRUS

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2003

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, as I have done every year, I rise again today to reiterate my

fierce objection to the illegal occupation of the island of Cyprus by Turkish troops and declare my grave concern for the future of the area. The island's twenty nine years of internal division make the status quo absolutely unacceptable.

In July 1974, Turkish troops captured the northern part of Cyprus, seizing more than a third of the island. The Turkish troops expelled 200,000 Greek-Cypriots from their homes and killed 5,000 citizens of the once-peaceful island. The Turkish invasion was a conscious and deliberate attempt at ethnic cleansing. Turkey proceeded to install 40,000 military personnel on Cyprus. Today, these troops, in conjunction with United Nations peacekeeping forces, make the small island of Cyprus one of the most militarized areas in the world. Over a quarter of a century later, approximately 1,500 Greek-Cypriots remain missing, including four Americans.

The Green Line, a 113-mile barbed wire fence, separates the Greek-Cypriot community from its Turkish-Cypriot counterpart. The Turkish Northern Republic of Cyprus (TNRC), recognized by no nation in the world except for Turkey, prohibits Greek-Cypriots from freely crossing the Green Line to visit the towns and communities of their families. With control of about 37 percent of the island, Turkey's military occupation has had severe consequences, most notably the dislocation of the Greek-Cypriot population and the resulting refugees.

Twenty-nine years later, the forced separation of these two communities still exists despite efforts by the United Nations (U.N.) and G-8 leadership to mend this rift between north and south. The U.N., with the explicit support of the United States, has sponsored several rounds of proximity talks between the former President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Glafcos Clerides, and Mr. Rauf Denktash, the self-proclaimed leader of the occupied northern part of the island.

In March 2003, the United Nations-sponsored Cyprus peace talks at the Hague between newly-elected President of Cyprus, Tassos Papadopoulos, and Mr. Denktash came to an abrupt halt. Responsibility for this unfortunate setback in the peace process rests largely with Mr. Denktash who rejected U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's Plan to end the 29-year division of Cyprus. It is a shame that the Secretary General's personal diplomacy was met by this kind of flat-out rejection. A large share of the blame also rests with the Turkish military and hard-line nationalists in Ankara, who have maintained the illegal Turkish military occupation of Cyprus since Turkish forces invaded the island in 1974. If the Government of Turkey were sincere about settling the Cyprus problem, they could have put the necessary pressure on Mr. Denktash to say "yes" to the U.N. Plan.

In sharp contrast to Mr. Denktash, Mr. Papadopoulos said "yes" to a public referendum on the Secretary General's plan. His response is consistent with years of efforts by the Government of Cyprus to try to negotiate in good faith to reunify the country—efforts that have been consistently rebuffed by the separatist Turkish-Cypriot regime. I praise President Papadopoulos for stressing that the Greek-Cypriot side will continue the efforts for reaching a solution to the Cyprus question both before and after Cyprus joins the European Union (EU).

In April 2003, the House of Representatives unanimously approved House Resolution 165, introduced by Mr. BEREUTER and myself, which expresses support for a renewed effort to find a peaceful and lasting settlement to the Cyprus problem by declaring appreciation for the efforts of Kofi Annan. The bill also expresses strong disappointment that Mr. Denktash rejected the comprehensive settlement offered by Secretary General Annan, thereby denying the Turkish-Cypriot people the opportunity to determine their own future.

A few days later, Cyprus experienced a major historic event on April 16, 2003, with the signing of the Treaty of Accession to the European Union. For the first time, the people of Cyprus have the opportunity to seal their future when Cyprus becomes a member of the E.U. next year. Upon accession to the European Union, Cyprus will, in its capacity as a full member, be firmly anchored to the western political and security structures, enhancing both geographically and qualitatively the operational capabilities of the Western world.

Needless to say, it would be in the best interest of Turkey to cooperate with the United Nations and the rest of the international community on Cyprus in order to advance its own membership in the European Union. Northern Cyprus will perhaps be the greatest beneficiary of Cypriot membership and resolution of the entire affair. It is currently in a state of economic distress that is being exacerbated by Turkish intransigence. Sadly, the people living in the northern part of the island continue to be mired in poverty as a direct result of their leadership's and Turkey's separatist policies. By joining the rest of Cyprus, it would become part of an already progressive economy, eliminating its financial dependence on Turkey.

So far we have seen that both Turkey and Mr. Denktash have sought to create preconditions on Cyprus' accession by tying that process to the resolution of a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus. The United States should remind Turkey that any threat against the Republic of Cyprus will be met with strong opposition and that Turkey does not possess any veto power over European Union membership. Promotion of Cyprus' membership will remove what has been a stumbling block in comprehensive settlement negotiations, and it will allow Turkey to strive toward the laudable goal of its own accession.

Despite the continued Turkish intransigence, earlier this year the Cypriot Government announced a package of measures aimed at assisting those Turkish Cypriots residing under the control of the Turkish occupation army. This package includes a wide range of political, social, humanitarian, educational and economic measures that will enhance the ability of the Turkish Cypriots to enjoy many of the benefits that the Republic of Cyprus offers to its citizens—as well as to share in the benefits of European Union membership. Far beyond a merely symbolic gesture, the package is a substantive program to integrate the Turkish Cypriot community into the larger Cypriot society as the country prepares to join the EU.

At the same time, the Turkish occupation regime partially lifted restrictions on freedom across the artificial line of division created by Turkey's military occupation. Since then, hundreds of thousands of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have crossed the line, to visit homes and areas of their own country that

were inaccessible to them for nearly 30 years. It isn't clear whether opening the border was just a tactic to ease the frustrations, or a sign of a fundamental change of heart. But it has produced rare displays of human kinship, exchanges of flowers and pastries, and emotional visits to homes abandoned in the mid-1970s.

Neither the Government's measures for the Turkish Cypriots, nor the partial lifting of restrictions by the occupation regime, should be seen as a substitute for a comprehensive resolution to end the division of Cyprus. We can only hope that the improved climate that has resulted from these steps will contribute to a negotiated settlement based on the U.N. framework in time for the accession of Cyprus to the European Union in May 2004.

We are all standing at the threshold of a historic opportunity that will shape the futures of generations of Cypriots, Greeks, and Turks. We have a responsibility to these ensuant generations to secure their futures by contributing to the efforts to create a peaceful world. We have a moral and ethical obligation to use our influence as Americans—as defenders of democracy, and as defenders of human rights, to reunify Cyprus. There have been twenty-nine years of illegitimate occupation, violence, and strife; let's not make it three decades.

Lastly, I want to bid a fond farewell to Cyprus's Ambassador to the United States, Mrs. Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis, after nearly 5 years of service in our nation's capital. I want to praise the Ambassador for her tremendous efforts and contributions to accomplishing awareness among Members of Congress and Administration officials of Cyprus' desire to be reunified. She will be missed.

CYPRUS

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2003

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the gentleman from Florida, Mr. BILIRAKIS, for organizing this special order on Cyprus, and for allowing us to reflect on the 29th anniversary of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. Cyprus has over the last three millennia faced war, devastation and foreign occupation. Today, we highlight the most recent occupation, which Cyprus has endured for 29 years.

Although Cyprus was granted its independence by Great Britain in 1960, as an independent republic composed of two equal communities, in 1974, Turkey exploited a crisis brought about by a military junta to occupy over one third of the island.

To this day, Turkey refuses to remove its troops, despite repeated condemnations by the United Nations.

The Cyprus conflict is one of the longest lasting issues of the international community, which remains unresolved. This conflict has had devastating consequences in terms of lives lost, children orphaned, economic losses and psychological trauma.

The present division of Cyprus, and the presence of 35,000 Turkish troops on the island, is completely unacceptable. We should not accept any further delays or excuses from Turkey on withdrawing from Cyprus.

Numerous resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council and the UN

General Assembly condemn both the Turkish invasion of Cyprus and the continuing presence of the Turkish military, as illegal acts of aggression.

In addition to the UN, other international bodies of similar stature, like the European Parliament, have also voiced their opposition to the occupation and endorse the reunification of Cyprus as the only acceptable solution to the Cyprus problem.

Faced with a unanimous condemnation by the international community, Turkish leaders have reverted to threats of annexation of Cyprus.

Reports by the European Commission on Human rights state that the Turkish government uses Turkish newspapers to issue threats that the Turkish army will move to occupy the southern part of Cyprus as well, which is under control of the Government of the Republic.

The human rights body of the European Commission adds that Turkey's puppet regime has increasingly threatened to settle, as yet unoccupied areas, with Turks, instead of returning these to the 35,000 lawful inhabitants, the Greek Cypriot refugees of Varosha.

This cannot and will not be tolerated. The United States has put Turkish and Turkish Cypriot leaders on notice.

Not only is it the right thing to do, but it would also benefit American interests in the region to help bring about an expeditious resolution of the tragic division of Cyprus.

Cyprus is a valued partner in the fight against the new global threats of terrorism and terrorist-sponsoring regimes, proliferation, illegal narcotics and international crime.

Cyprus and the United States also have shared values and a shared commitment to building a world based on open markets, democratic principles and the rule of law.

While the Turkish stance, which clearly led to the failure of U.N.-sponsored negotiations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, must change immediately, we, in Congress, will not waiver on our commitment for Turkish troops to end their illegal occupation of Cyprus once and for all, bringing to an end a tragic period in Cypriot history.

As a U.S. NATO ally and European Union aspirant, Turkey should be held to the highest standards of compliance with its international obligations.

For 29 years, Turkey has ignored the will of the United States and has repeatedly violated the mandates of the United Nations to cease its illegal occupation of Cyprus. Rather than withdrawing, it has reinforced its military presence.

The moment of truth is at hand, and time has run out for Turkish and Turkish Cypriot leaders.

They must undertake concrete steps to forge an agreement on the terms of reunification, and must do so with all deliberate speed.

HONORING MARY LOU STROM

HON. ROB SIMMONS

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2003

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mary Lou Strom of Enfield, CT who is leaving the political arena after 22 years of

dedicated service to the people of North-eastern Connecticut.

Mary Lou has set a standard of excellence for those engaged in local politics. Having served for 8 years on the Planning and Zoning Commission and another 14 years on the Enfield Town Council, Mary Lou has become a familiar face to Connecticut politics and has truly made a difference in her community.

What is most exceptional about Mary Lou is her understanding that it is our fellow citizens who are most important in the political process. All of us know that if democracy is to work properly, quality leadership is required at every level of government, and Mary Lou has proven to be that type of leader. Because of Mary Lou's service, Enfield and the surrounding communities are a better place in which to live, work and raise a family.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the Members of the House of Representatives to join me in honoring the service of Mary Lou Strom as she leaves the political arena. She has been a blessing to her community and her country and will be greatly missed.

IN RECOGNITION OF PENNKNOLL VILLAGE

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2003

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Pennknoll Village located in Everett, Pennsylvania. On July 26, 2003 the retirement community will celebrate 25 years of service, and acknowledge the employees who have worked at Pennknoll Village since the inception of the institution.

In the late 1970s, Diakon Lutheran Social Services, which serves nearly 60,000 people annually, revamped the program and, with the help of the county, built a new nursing facility. Pennknoll Village has grown to become a vital part of the community and now accommodates 133 residents, including those in need of short-term care.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor that I rise today to recognize Pennknoll Village and its 25 years of service. Central and western Pennsylvania are a better place because of workers like those employed by Pennknoll Village. I wish them continued success over the coming years.

ENSURE FAIR WAGES AND DUE PROCESS FOR DAY LABORERS

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2003

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the "Day Laborer Fairness and Protection Act," a bill to ensure fair wages and due process for day laborers.

Day laborers are individuals who are hired by agencies to work on a day-to-day basis for employers who pay for the services of temporary laborers. Day labor is not of a clerical or professional nature. Most day laborers perform construction, warehouse, restaurant, janitorial, landscaping or light industrial work—